

**CHARLIE BAKER**  
*Governor*



**KARYN POLITO**  
*Lt. Governor*

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**Massachusetts Health Connector Marks Record Enrollment and Strong  
Customer Service**

**BOSTON** – The Baker-Polito Administration announced the results of the Massachusetts Health Connector's recent Open Enrollment period that ended last week. The Connector successfully managed the highest enrollment totals of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) era, with significant applicant and member activity buttressed by strong customer service performance.

Enrollment for February 1st stands at over 246,000 people, the highest since the ACA was implemented and approaching the 252,000 in Health Connector coverage before 100,000 people became eligible for other coverage through Medicaid expansion in January 2014.

"Fixing the broken Health Connector and restoring a reliable customer service support system for the program were top priorities for our administration after taking office," **said Governor Charlie Baker.** "Over the last two years, the Connector's leadership and staff have worked tirelessly to transform the exchange into a functional and reliable service the people of Massachusetts deserve. While there is still work to do, I am proud of the work that has been accomplished to date and feel confident that the restored Health Connector can play a crucial role in the state's health care structure."

"The Health Connector plays an important role in ensuring communities across the Commonwealth have access to affordable health care," **said Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito.** "We are pleased to see such significant and targeted progress toward enrolling new people and look forward to continued progress for years to come."

“The Health Connector is vitally important to our state’s commitment to making health care accessible to everyone,” **said Secretary Marylou Sudders, Secretary of Health and Human Services.** “Over the last two years, the Health Connector has gone from an agency hanging on to one that is home for thousands who need health insurance and a powerful advocate for universal coverage.”

The Health Connector started Open Enrollment on November 1, 2016 with 233,000 members, and retained more than 85 percent of those members despite many facing significant premium increases due to rate changes by some carriers. The Health Connector implemented a large member communication plan during Open Enrollment encouraging shopping, and more than 65,000 members switched plans for 2017. The 28 percent switch rate was four times higher than the usual 3-7 percent switch rate during an Open Enrollment.

In addition, 53,000 people who did not have coverage through the Health Connector enrolled in a plan for 2017. That is an increase of nearly 50 percent from the 36,000 new members added during 2016 Open Enrollment. The Health Connector’s new member strategy was fueled by an outreach effort focused on communities with higher rates of uninsured residents and that have been typically slow to sign up for coverage. In those targeted communities, new enrollments were 52 percent higher than 2016, with communities like Mattapan (93 percent) Chelsea (81 percent), Brockton (85 percent) and Everett (77 percent) experiencing the biggest increases. The Health Connector contracted with 16 community organizations through its Navigator program to help educate consumers about options available to them, and help uninsured people complete an application and select a plan.

“A successful Open Enrollment is reliant on support from the entire Commonwealth, including Governor Baker and Secretary Sudders, on through to our hard-working staff, our Navigators and assisters, and our customer service team,” **said Louis Gutierrez, the Executive Director of the Health Connector.** “I am grateful that we were able to capably handle the significant member activity we saw, which also serves as a reminder that Massachusetts values access to affordable, health coverage, and will continue to do so in the future.”

“After missing open enrollment last year and going without health insurance, I was always worried. I learned coverage was necessary after breaking my leg a few years ago while playing rugby. If I hadn’t been covered, the expenses would’ve been astronomical, this taught me that in today’s world, you have to be sure you’re covered in case of an accident,” **said Vincent Daley, a Cambridge resident** who signed up for coverage through the Health Connector during Open Enrollment with the help of a Navigator. “The staff at the Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee walked me through the process and showed what I needed to do. Applying for health insurance is not something you’re taught. But, after learning the process, I even helped a friend

apply for coverage, too.”

When Governor Baker took office in 2015, improving the Health Connector’s customer service was a top priority. Two years later, customer service outlets were able to successfully support a substantially high volume of calls and requests. Calls to the call center increased from 243,619 during 2016 Open Enrollment to 345,621 for 2017 Open Enrollment, an increase of over 40 percent. Visits to the Health Connector’s six walk-in centers increased from 14,710 for 2016 Open Enrollment to 17,711 for 2017 Open Enrollment, an increase of 20 percent. The customer service platforms were able to handle the additional traffic, particularly with the call center remaining within predetermined service levels for hold time and abandonment rates. Additionally, customer satisfaction scores remained near 80 percent satisfaction during this Open Enrollment.

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